

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (currently amended) A pneumatic tire provided with a plurality of main grooves extended in a tire circumferential direction on a tread surface, wherein, with regard to a main groove having a groove width widened during inflation among said plurality of main grooves and including a generally inwardly-tapering U-shaped main groove portion as viewed in cross-section from the tread surface toward a groove bottom and a narrow groove portion, a groove wall near a shoulder is inclined outward in a tire width direction from the tread surface toward a the groove bottom, a single generally trapezoidally-shaped thin rib having a symmetrical configuration as viewed in cross-section protrudes from the groove bottom along the groove wall near the shoulder and has a first slanted wall inclined outward that extends in cross-section parallel with the groove wall near the shoulder to form the narrow groove portion therebetween and a second slanted wall inclined inward in the tire width direction, and a groove wall near the center is inclined outward in the tire width direction from the tread surface toward the groove bottom and forms the generally inwardly-tapering U-shaped main groove portion with the second slanted wall of the generally trapezoidally-shaped thin rib wherein the generally trapezoidally-shaped thin rib being disposed towards a shoulder side of the pneumatic tire relative to the generally inwardly-tapering U-shaped main groove portion while the generally inwardly-tapering U-shaped main groove portion being disposed towards a center side of the pneumatic tire relative to the generally trapezoidally-shaped thin rib.

2. (canceled)

3. (original) The pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein a height of said thin rib is made equal to or lower than said tread surface, and a height difference between a top face of said thin rib and said tread surface is set in a range of 0 to 4 mm.

4. (currently amended) The pneumatic tire according the claim 1, wherein the narrow groove portion between said thin rib and said groove wall near the shoulder has a generally uniform width of 4 mm or smaller.

5. (currently amended) The pneumatic tire according to any one of claims 1, 3, ~~4 and 5~~ and 4, wherein said main groove having the groove width widened during the inflation is a straight groove.

Please add the new claims.

6. (new) A pneumatic tire comprising:

a tread portion having a plurality of main grooves therein, said plurality of main grooves extending in a tire circumferential direction along a tread surface; and

a side wall portion of the pneumatic tire contacting a shoulder of said tread portion, said shoulder being outward in a tire width direction, wherein:

at least one interior main groove of said plurality of main grooves is located at the center of said tread portion and extends from said tread surface,

at least one exterior main groove of said plurality of main grooves is between at least one interior main groove and said shoulder,

said at least one exterior main groove has a first groove wall, a second groove wall, and a thin rib,

said first and second groove walls extend from said tread surface to the bottom of said at least one exterior main groove, and incline outward in said tire width direction from said tread surface toward the bottom of said at least one exterior main groove, and

said thin rib protrudes from said bottom of said at least one exterior main groove, a space between said thin rib and said first groove wall being larger than a space between said thin rib and said second groove wall.

7. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claim 6, wherein said second groove wall is between said first groove wall and said shoulder.

8. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claim 6, wherein said first groove wall extends from said tread surface to the bottom of said at least one exterior main groove.

9. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claim 6, wherein said at least one exterior main groove is wider after inflation of the pneumatic tire than before said inflation.

10. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claim 6, wherein each of said plurality of main grooves are straight grooves.

11. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claim 6, further comprising a bead portion, a carcass layer, and bead cores.

12. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claim 6, wherein a height of said thin rib is made equal to said tread surface.

13. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claim 6, wherein a height of said thin rib is made lower than said tread surface.

14. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claim 6, wherein a height difference between the tip of said thin rib and said tread surface is set in a range of 0 to 4 mm.

15. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claim 6, wherein said space between said thin rib and said second groove wall is 4 mm or smaller.

16. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claim 6, wherein said first groove wall inclines with an angle of less than 90 degrees with respect to said tread surface.

17. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claim 6, wherein said second groove wall inclines with an angle of greater than 90 degrees with respect to said tread surface.

18. (new) The pneumatic tire according to claim 6, wherein said second groove wall inclines toward said shoulder.